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ABSTRACT

This booklet presents the concept of school effectiveness, the factors associated with effectiveness, and supporting research. Six factors of school effectiveness are discussed: (1) strong instructional leadership by the principal; (2) clear instructional focus; (3) high expectations and standards; (4) safe and orderly climate; (5) frequent monitoring of student achievement; and (6) active parent involvement. Included is a chapter on the current debate surrounding the effective schools movement. Fifty-four references are included. (SI)

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Effective Schools Research: Practice and Promise

Arthur W. Steller

EA 020 439

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Effective Schools Research: Practice and Promise

by
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Introduction

Educators are faced with contradictory messages from the American public regarding public education. On the one hand, the public views the schools as inferior institutions responsible for or contributing to a host of social, economic, and political ills. On the other hand, the public regards the schools as the major, and sometimes the only, institution capable of solving any number of national calamities – AIDS, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, highway deaths, low voter turnouts – the list could go on and on. Being both the problem and the solution, public education carries a heavy burden – also a tremendous opportunity.

People have high expectations for their schools and believe that schools can and should be places where *all* children can learn. This belief is seldom expressed at a level of specificity that provides a blueprint for schools that will be adored by taxpayers. Rather, it is expressed much like people approach modern art: "I don't know much about art, but I know what I like." Although taxpayers in general may not know much about education, they do know what they like. And they like children to learn.

Schools are expected to instruct students in the basic skills and teach attitudes and behaviors associated with good citizenship. They are assessed by the degree to which students demonstrate mastery of these generally held expectations. In many communities, standardized test

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scores have become the most commonly used means of assessing school effectiveness.

In this fastback the author will present the concept of school effectiveness, the factors associated with effectiveness, and the research that supports it.

What Makes a School Effective?

During the 1980s a prevalent theme in the many reform reports is the call for *effective schools*. Over the past 10 to 15 years a considerable body of research has accumulated that helps to identify the characteristics of effective schools. One of the pioneer studies of school influences on achievement was done by George Weber (1971). In his investigation of four inner-city schools in New York City that were performing above national norms on standardized tests, Weber identified several factors contributing to their achievement at higher than expected levels. These were: the tone the principal set for the school; high expectations; quiet, pleasant learning atmosphere; acquisition of reading skills; evaluation of pupil progress; additional reading personnel; phonics instruction; and individualization of instruction. The last three items have not been confirmed by subsequent school effectiveness research.

Henry Dyer (1972) developed a procedure for predicting school effectiveness by using student socioeconomic status (SES) as well as current and past achievement test scores. He was able to calculate a measure of school effectiveness based on a prediction of the expected mean scores for a school and the discrepancy between predicted scores and actual scores. By factoring in SES data, the assumption was that higher SES schools would achieve higher test scores than lower SES schools. This was generally true; but effective school advocates were quick to point out that this need not be the case, since

there were schools using Dyer's model that scored higher than predicted.

Robert Klitgaard and George Hall (1973) built on Dyer's work by identifying schools that were "statistically unusual" in that they were achieving well above expected or predicted levels. After reviewing data from schools in Michigan and New York, from New York City elementary schools, and schools participating in Project Talent and Project Yardstick, they concluded: "moving away from average effects in educational research and policy making does seem worthwhile. We have located schools and districts that consistently perform better than their peers. It is probably worthwhile to continue such research, and to begin looking for unusually effective classrooms and programs."

Wilbur Brookover and Lawrence Lezotte (1977), in their study of characteristics of schools with improving student achievement, examined six Michigan schools that had improving achievement and two that had declining achievement. In the improving schools:

1. Staff placed more emphasis on basic reading and mathematics objectives.
2. Staff and the principals believed that all students can master basic learning objectives.
3. Staff believed that most of their students would finish high school.
4. Staff believed they could make a real difference in student learning, regardless of students' home background.
5. Principals tended to exert more leadership in areas of instruction, discipline, and evaluation of student performance.
6. Staff tended to accept responsibility for accountability as measured by criterion-referenced tests.
7. Staff were less satisfied with student achievement than their counterparts in declining schools, who tended to be complacent.
8. Parent-initiated contact was more prevalent.

With the focus of investigation changing to school-level analysis, researchers set out to discover what factors in schools encouraged higher student achievement, while holding socioeconomic factors constant. Schools were matched on the basis of student SES and then scrutinized to determine why some schools scored higher than others with similar student SES populations. Brookover et al. (1979) found that in schools with similar students, high achieving schools differed from low achieving schools in the following ways:

> Our data indicate that high achieving schools are most likely to be characterized by the students feeling that they have control or mastery of their academic work, and the school system is not stacked against them. This is expressed in their feelings that what they do may make a difference in their success and that teachers care about their academic performance. Teachers and principals in higher achieving schools express the belief that students can master their academic work, and that they expect them to do so; and they are committed to seeing that their students learn to read, and to do mathematics, and other academic work. These teacher and principal expectations are expressed in such a way that the students perceive that they are expected to learn and the school academic norms are recognized as setting a standard of high achievement. These norms and the teachers' commitment are expressed in the instructional activities which absorb most of the school day. There is little differentiation among students or the instructional programs provided for them. Teachers consistently reward students for their demonstrated achievement in the academic subjects and do not indiscriminately reward students for responding regardless of the correctness of their response. (p. 143)

Michael Rutter (1979) and his associates followed students in 12 inner-city schools in London for five years. While holding SES constant in these schools, the researchers studied four student outcomes: achievement, attendance, behavior, and delinquency. All of the 12 schools had similar input variables, but the outcomes were quite different. The researchers identified seven characteristics under the con-

trol of teachers and administrators that accounted for the differences. These were: 1) academic emphasis, 2) skills of teachers, 3) teachers' instructional behaviors, 4) rewards and punishments, 5) student climate, 6) student responsibility and participation, and 7) staff responsibility and participation.

The late Ron Edmonds has been one of the leading spokespersons for the effective schools movement. His research over the years dealt primarily with urban schools that were instructionally effective for poor and minority children. The Search for Effective Schools Projects, a multi-phased effort, culminated with a study comparing effective and ineffective schools in Lansing, Michigan. Edmonds (1979) identifies the characteristics of effective schools for the urban poor as:

> a) They have strong administrative leadership without which the disparate elements of good schooling can neither be brought together nor kept together; b) Schools that are instructionally effective for poor children have a climate of expectation in which no children are permitted to fall below minimum but efficacious levels of achievement; c) The school's atmosphere is orderly without being rigid, quiet without being oppressive, and generally conducive to the instructional business at hand; d) Effective schools get that way partly by making it clear that pupil acquisition of the basic school skills takes precedence over all other school activities; e) When necessary, school energy and resources can be diverted from other business in furtherance of the fundamental objectives; and f) There must be some means by which pupil progress can be frequently monitored. These means may be as traditional as classroom testing on the day's lesson or as advanced as criterion-referenced systemwide standardized measures. The point is that some means must exist in the school by which the principal and the teachers remain constantly aware of pupil progress in relationship to instructional objectives. (p. 22)

Stewart Purkey and Marshall Smith (1983), in their comprehensive review of school effectiveness research, present a "portrait" of an effective school, which includes organizational/structural variables and process variables. The organizational/structural variables are:

1. School-site management
2. Instructional leadership
3. Staff stability
4. Curriculum articulation and organization
5. Schoolwide staff development
6. Parental involvement and support
7. Schoolwide recognition of academic success
8. Maximized learning time
9. District support

The process variables are:

1. Collaborative planning and collegial relationships
2. Sense of community
3. Clear goals and high expectations commonly shared
4. Order and discipline (pp. 442-46)

With reference to the process variables, Purkey and Smith note: "the new school climate must develop over time as people begin to think and behave in new ways. The process is certainly not mystical or terribly complex, but it would seem to demand an organic conception of schools and some faith in people's ability to work together toward common ends" (p. 445).

Five Factors of School Effectiveness

Research on effective schools has not been without its critics (see Cuban 1983; Stedman 1987 and 1988). For example, Purkey and Smith (1983), after reviewing the research, state: "We find it is weak in many respects, most notably in its tendency to present narrow, often simplistic, recipes for school improvement derived from nonexperimental data" (p. 427). However, they go on to say: "Theory and common sense, however, do support many of the findings of school effectiveness research" (p. 427). What research has clearly demonstrated is that some schools are better than others with similar popu-

lations. And some schools serving lower socioeconomic students achieve much higher than expected. Although there are variations in the school effectiveness research, five factors seem to be consistent across studies. These are:

1. Strong instructional leadership by the principal
2. Clear instructional focus
3. High expectations and standards
4. Safe and orderly climate
5. Frequent monitoring of student achievement

Apparently these factors interact with one another to produce a good school (Gage 1978). All must coexist for significant positive results to occur. Therefore, those who undertake school improvement using the effective schools model must advance on multiple fronts simultaneously in order to achieve maximum benefits.

Aside from the research, the most persuasive rationale for the five-factor school effectiveness model is that practitioners can embrace the ideas. Unlike some other school improvement models, this one is relatively simple; it makes common sense. And what makes the model particularly palatable to school boards is that its advocates have not tied their claims of higher achievement to correspondingly higher funding levels.

A legitimate question can be raised as to whether these five factors actually cause a school to be effective or whether they are camouflaging other equally potent factors. Further research may provide an answer to this question. The fact remains that these five factors appear to permeate effective schools. Both practitioners and scholars can rally around them as a framework for improving schools and student achievement.

In the chapters that follow, I shall elaborate on each of these five factors identified with the school effectiveness movement.

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Instructional Leadership by the Principal

Is the statement, "Show me an effective school and I'll show you an effective principal," a valid one? What are the qualities that make an "effective" principal? Researchers and policymakers are vitally interested in the answer to these questions since they may provide the most direct means to school improvement. In practical terms, it might mean that a school system would decide to devote considerable time and money to recruiting "effective" principals or to allocate most of its staff development resources for training "effective" principals.

To some extent the questions above are rhetorical ones. Research has not yet provided a definitive answer to what makes an "effective" principal. For some the definition of an "effective" principal is one who gets results, one whose school is perfoming well. But is this an adequate definition?

The author recalls a principal who by any standard criterion could not be labeled as even an average principal, except for one quality – his school worked. This principal fumbled routine administrative tasks and regularly blew assignments given by his superintendent, but he had one redeeming trait – he cared deeply for other people. Consequently, when his faculty meetings started to fall apart due to his ineptness, his teachers stepped forward and carried the ball. Others did his work, and the results were fairly good. Was he an effective principal because his interpersonal skills were such that his staff made sure the school was achieving? Could an "effective" principal have led that school to even

higher levels of performance? Perhaps. This author's view is that the principal's influence is the key to a truly effective school.

The principal has become the new cult hero of American education. Former Secretary of Education William Bennett has repeatedly sung the praises of Joe Clark, a black principal in Patterson, New Jersey, who turned an inner-city high school around. Some educators do not like Secretary Bennett's choice due to some of Mr. Clark's flamboyant antics – wholesale suspension of students, walking the halls with a bullhorn in his left hand and a baseball bat in his right. Nevertheless, Mr. Clark is portrayed as a principal responsible for returning order to a very troubled school. Another, perhaps more acceptable model, is George McKenna, principal of a violence-torn high school in Los Angeles. Mr. McKenna is also tough but uses love, compassion, and academic rigor to transform his high school into a successful learning environment. His story was told in a made-for-television movie, "The George McKenna Story," which captured another view of the power and influence of the principalship.

The principalship has been rediscovered by the media, the public, and the education establishment for what it has always been – the bottom line for improving schools. Strong and committed principals are not satisfied with the status quo. They envision what changes need to be made and they get them done. Principals welcome this image of influential leader. Having the spotlight on them empowers dedicated principals to strive to be even better and gives deserved recognition to those who already are doing a good job.

Effective principals are at the center of curricular and instructional improvements within their schools. Yet there is currently a shortage of instructional leaders in the principalship. Gordon Cawelti (1987), executive director of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, has proposed a simple formula for instructional leadership: "Clear Goals + Strong Incentives + Appropriate Skills = Instructional Leadership." He uses this formula as a referent when explaining why there is a scarcity of instructional leaders:

> Clear goals are almost universally advocated, but schools are invariably plagued by goal ambiguity. Board members vary in their priorities, and superintendents often become expendable because they can't meet diverse expectations. Teachers also press their own subjects, values, and agendas. Reaching consensus on goals and priorities is a tough job. Finding acceptable indicators of progress is even tougher.
>
> The absence of strong incentives for school improvement is a rather severe impediment to leadership. To move out rapidly is often a major risk, and many principals learn it is not worth the grief. I know one principal whose firm policy for his school is to seek no recognition or publicity – good or bad. In another district, a principal who made an energetic effort at instructional improvement was socially ostracized by her colleagues. . . . Superintendents and school boards who realize this and find ways of providing other strong incentives for meritorious performance will see that such plans pay off in altering the norm of maintenance rather than leadership. Of course instructional leaders need appropriate skills. . . . When all three elements are in place, we will see dramatic improvements in learning opportunities for students and the sought-after outcomes that are understood and respected by the public.

Chester Finn, Jr. (1987), assistant secretary at the U.S. Department of Education, is critical of how principals are currently selected and trained: "Unfortunately, the means by which American school principals are selected, trained, and certified are often ill-suited to the employment of savvy, bold and enterprising leaders." He goes on to state that "A great school almost always boasts a crackerjack principal . . . they do possess a fierce determination that 'what should be shall be,' and they radiate an infectious enthusiasm for excellence." If given just one action to upgrade schools in this country, Finn would hire the best principals possible and give them wide-ranging responsibility.

The selection of top-notch principals and assistants can go a long way toward creating more effective schools. Finn is right on target when he says: "The principalship is probably the single most power-

ful fulcrum for improving school effectiveness. Although better selection of school leaders is not the complete remedy for all educational problems, it offers an important beginning. Developing, selecting, and supporting effective educational leaders is the key to achieving the school excellence that Americans want and deserve."

Richard Andrews and Roger Soder (1987), after studying achievement results of approximately 20,000 students in Seattle's 67 elementary schools, would ageee that the selection procedure of principals ought to be revised "to introduce those principal behaviors that are linked to student achievement." They also would extend that same advice to principals' preservice training, continuing education, and evaluation.

Andrews and Soder confirmed earlier research that effective schools have principals who exhibit strong instructional leadership: "the normal equivalent gain scores of students in strong-leader schools were significantly greater in both total reading and total mathematics than those of students in schools rated as having average or weak leaders."

The effective principal's instructional leadership has a singular thrust – to ensure that all students learn. Mastery of the basic subject matter is the measure of success for the school, the faculty, and the principal. The influence of the principal on curriculum and instruction is clear-cut and unambiguous. Van Cleve Morris (1987) descibes it succinctly:

> As the school's executive, the principal customarily exerts a powerful influence in urging youngsters to higher levels of effort and attainment in working at their studies; indeed, in much of the literature on school effectiveness a prominent item is the degree to which the principals engender an ambience of hard work, self-discipline, and subject-matter mastery among the student body. (p. 15)

Effective principals often operate outside bureaucratic channels in order to achieve their end of raising student achievement. In 1976, the *Chicago Tribune* conducted a survey of principals in that city and

reported the results on the front page with two headlines. One headline for a story based on the survey of all principals was, "We're Toothless Tigers, School Principals Say." The other headline for a story based on interviews with the 10 most effective Chicago principals as ranked by the Citizens Schools Committee was, "10 Top-Rated Principals See No Lack of Authority." The different views of authority reflected in the two headlines caused McPherson and Crowson (1987) to comment:

> The majority of principals in the city were constrained by the system, rendered frustrated and ineffective by a multitude of pressures they could not control or use; in contrast, a modest number of their colleagues were not constrained by that same system. Obedience to the system yields constraints and ineffectiveness while affiliation with the local school is associated with discretion and effectiveness. (pp. 130-131)

As superintendent of a large urban system, this author expects principals to function both within district guidelines and to work to increase student achievement. Yet principals who demonstrate that they are strong instructional leaders capable of producing results have much greater latitude to bend the rules. Occasionally, one even looks the other way rather than reprimand an effective principal who works around the system. Van Cleve Morris (1987) aptly describes the situation:

> the measure of a school principal is his or her ability to produce results, namely, reading and mathematics scores and general achievement scores at or above grade level. Of course, as in any organization, the chief executive wants the middle manager (the principal) to keep problems off the superintendent's desk and, in Navy lingo, to "run a taut ship." But this typically means not merely the absence of problems bouncing up the chain of command, but bottom-line delivery of the school's "product," that is mastery of the curriculum. Under the aegis of this kind of superintendent, a principal would never be fired, reassigned, or bumped back to the classroom if his or her school consis-

tently showed acceptable pupil performance levels. Complaints against a principal from teachers, students, or parents would have little credit with a superintendent if the principal can deliver, year after year, solid evidence that students are learning the curriculum. (p. 16)

How Do Effective Instructional Leaders Behave?

Effective school principals are not good leaders in a general sense; they are strong instructional leaders with a compelling purpose. They are convinced that it is their destiny to get students reading, doing mathematics, and mastering the entire curriculum. Each accomplishment spurs them on to higher peaks. They challenge others to climb the same peaks and bask in the sunlight of success.

In the Seattle study cited earlier, Andrews and Soder identified the traits of strong principals as being marshals of resources; instructional resources themselves; communicators with regard to instructional visions, goals, planning, and standards; and visible presences throughout their schools. The literature on effective schools is replete with examples of principals espousing their visions to the faculty, students, and the community as they embark on a new path of excellence. Persell and Cookson (1982) describe such principals:

> Effective principals appear to have a vision of what their school should be like. Without this mental picture, the leadership role can too easily fall into the trap of reacting to negative situations and not creating positive situations. Above all, principals can do their job better if they are secure in themselves and have faith that their decisions will, in the final analysis, prove to be the best alternatives given the set of specific circumstances they find themselves confronting. In essence, "strong" leadership is the capacity to mobilize available resources in order to implement policies that lead to desired outcomes. (p. 28)

Vision and good intentions alone are insufficient to produce an effective school. The principal must do something to translate ideas into actions. Some fall short at this point. Persell and Cookson (1982) tell us what effective principals do that make the difference:

To address the question of why some principals are more effective than others in running a good school, we reviewed more than 75 research studies and reports. From this review, we identified nine recurrent behaviors that good principals display. These are:

1. Demonstrating a commitment to academic goals
2. Creating a climate of high expectations
3. Functioning as an instructional leader
4. Being a forceful and dynamic leader
5. Consulting effectively with others
6. Creating order and discipline
7. Marshaling resources
8. Using time well
9. Evaluating results

Many researchers and advocates in the effective schools movement emphasize the principal's ability to affect school climate. As Troisi (1983) states: "Effective administrative leadership is the key to establishing and maintaining a climate conducive to academic learning and achievement" (pp. 9-10). Specifically, effective principals create a school climate where academic achievement is the primary goal. And policies and procedures are instituted to achieve that goal. In addition, effective principals provide the administrative support that allows teachers to concentrate on this primary goal.

Effective principals have high energy levels and work hard to produce results. Lorri Manasse (1984) reports the conclusions of a study comparing high performing principals with average principals: "High performing principals are distinguished from average performers by their strong sense of themselves as leaders, their focused involvement in change, and their highly developed analytic skills" (p. 8). Furthermore, the qualities associated with effective principals were:

> Vision; commitment to purpose; initiative; discretionary decision-making; communicating high expectations to students and staff; management behavior of creating order and discipline, marshalling resources, using time well and evaluating results; instructional super-

vision; symbolic leadership; personal characteristics (high energy, long hours, listening, interpersonal skills, and high tolerance for stress), and possessing various leadership styles.

Final Comments

Success or failure in education ultimately rests with what happens in the individual school building. And the person who occupies the principal's office in that building is a major factor in the school's success or failure. The principal sets expectations for teachers, who in turn set expectations for students. The principal establishes the school's approach to monitoring student performance. The principal decides how parents can be involved in schoolwide activities. As the late Ron Edmonds said, "One of the tangible and indispensable characteristics of effective schools is strong administrative leadership without which the disparate elements of good schooling can be neither brought together nor held together."

Some remain unconvinced that effective schools must have principals who are strong instructional leaders. They claim that teachers can exert that kind of leadership. In effective schools, teachers do provide instructional leadership; but it is most likely to be a shared leadership with the principal. This, of course, is a healthy and productive situation. Ideally, the principal and a number of teachers and other support staff should all be strong instructional leaders. But the principal remains the key to an effective school. Lawrence Lezotte has gone so far as to say, "If you know of an effective school without an effective principal, call me collect." The chances that his phone bill will be excessive are remote.

Clear Instructional Focus

Among real estate agents there is a saying that the three keys to buying a good property are: 1) location, 2) location, and 3) location. In an effective school, the three keys to having a good instructional program are: 1) focus, 2) focus, and 3) focus.

An effective school has a clear instructional focus that is understood and communicated widely. Everyone knows that the centerpiece of the school is instruction in the academics. The staff regularly articulate to parents and the public what it is they are doing and why. This communication builds trust and respect.

Teachers and other adults within the school are aware of how their roles interface and build on one another. The third-grade teacher knows the curriculum of the second grade and the fourth grade. Teachers are better instructional planners when they know what content and skills came previously and what is to follow.

Many worthwhile activities can be distracting from the school's central focus on instruction. Principals and teachers must sometimes say "No" to yet another fund drive or the eighth poster contest of the year, when they interfere or conflict with the school's instructional goals. In effective schools a high proportion of adult conversation has to do with children or instructional matters. This is not to say that the staff do not have fun and share outside interests with one another, but they keep returning to the instructional issues at hand and how to help youngsters achieve.

Staff in effective schools share the focus on instruction. Usually a mission statement is written down and periodically reviewed by the staff. Whether or not there is a written statement, the staff can describe the shared mission of the school. Typically, goals and objectives are determined annually to provide even more direction for the year.

A clear instructional focus helps teachers and administrators make daily judgments regarding what children should be learning and how it should be taught. When decisions have to be made about how to use available time and resources, it is this shared understanding of the school's mission that provides perspective to extracurricular activities, assemblies, and school dances.

Having a clear instructional focus means that there is a common set of skills and content that students are expected to learn. A common curriculum with sequenced objectives lets students and their parents know what is required to succeed in a grade or a course. And teachers know what they have to do to prepare students for success with their next teacher.

Focused Teacher Behavior

A corollary of clear focus on instruction is focused teacher behavior. David Squires, William Huitt, and John Segars (1983), in reviewing the research on teacher behaviors associated with student achievement, conclude: "Our review of the research on effective classrooms indicates that teachers can have an impact on student behaviors and student achievement. And teachers do that by planning, managing, and instructing in ways that keep students involved and successfully covering appropriate content" (p. 15).

Nicholas Troisi (1983), in his review of research dealing with effective teaching and student achievement, concluded:

> Effective teachers have well-organized and well-managed classrooms. Students know what is expected, what they are supposed to do, and

what equipment, if any, they will need. Transitions from one activity to another are accomplished quickly and with a minimum of teacher direction. Students listen to and respond to teacher presentations. Activities move at a brisk pace. Students, when required to work on their own, know what to do and go about the work in a businesslike way. Students know how to transfer skills. They also know what behavior is permissible in the classroom and the school. Goofing off, tardiness and inattention do not occur in the classroom of an effective teacher. There is a purpose. The effective teacher keeps the kids riveted to learning.

Another approach to focused teacher behavior is the program instituted by Joan Abrams (1981), former superintendent in Red Bank, New Jersey. She calls her program "Precise Teaching," and it has resulted in dramatic improvements in student achievement. It calls for a clearly articulated curriculum, correlation of instructional materials with objectives, extensive planning by teachers, and beginning with whole-group instruction. The emphasis is teaching to an objective. This involves sharing the objective with pupils so they understand what is expected of them, explaining why they are working on the particular objective, teaching the objective, providing guided practice, providing independent practice, and finally evaluating whether the objective was achieved.

Teacher Teamwork

When teachers work together, the established curriculum becomes the glue that makes the instructional programs one piece. In effective schools the teachers review the curriculum as a total group or by grade levels. If a curriculum guide does not exist, they create an informal one by exchanging good practices they have used to accomplish the instructional objectives that all children are to master.

In effective schools, teamwork helps to reinforce all components of the curriculum. Teachers coordinate homework assignments so that they are balanced throughout the week. Parents know what the home-

work expectations are and how homework relates to class work. Teachers plan field trips cooperatively to broaden the curriculum beyond the classroom walls.

Faculty meetings in an effective school are occasions to highlight the instructional focus and to celebrate successes – large or small. Encouragement and support from one's peers keep the focus on instruction. The faculty lounge becomes a place for mutual assistance.

Evaluation of Teachers

In effective schools the strong instructional focus becomes apparent in the teacher evaluation plan. If certain teacher behaviors associated with student achievement are expected, then these behaviors should be reflected in the evaluation plan. When recruiting, administrators should let candidates know that a strong instructional focus is expected and is reflected in the evaluation procedures used.

Final Comments

Effective schools can serve as models for how to achieve a clear instructional focus. We know what the elements of a strong instructional focus are. They include a strong sense of mission, an emphasis on academic achievement, a common curriculum, focused teacher behaviors, teacher teamwork, and an evaluation system that reflects the instructional focus. Achieving a strong instructional focus takes time. It cannot happen by edict. When it is achieved, a school is on its way to becoming an effective school.

High Expectations and Standards

The difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves but how she's treated.

(spoken by Eliza Doolittle in George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*)

People typically behave in ways consistent with the expectations others have for them or those they have for themselves. Parents and teachers are the first to set expectations for children. The expectations they have and the manner in which those expectations are communicated have a profound influence on the lives of children.

In *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (1968), Rosenthal and Jacobson studied how teachers' expectations influence how much achievement actually occurs, or as they put it: "one person's expectation for another person's behavior can quite unwittingly become a more accurate prediction simply for its having been made." This much-quoted study has been criticized by some researchers on methodological grounds; but its basic conclusion has become widely accepted, and it has great relevance for the research on effective schools.

In this study teachers were told that certain of their students were "late bloomers" with unusually high potential for achievement, when in fact they were randomly selected pupils. After eight months these "special" children made significantly larger improvements on IQ tests than did their peers, although no special instructional programs were used. Enhanced teacher expectations appeared to be the causal factor.

The researchers did not identify specific reasons for these gains, but they did speculate:

> On the basis of other experiments on interpersonal self-fulfilling prophecies, we can only speculate as to how teachers brought about intellectual competence simply by expecting it. . . . To summarize our speculations, we may say that by what she said, by how and when she said it, by her facial expressions, posture and perhaps by touch, the teacher may have communicated to the children of the experimental group that she expected improved intellectual performance. Such communications together with possible changes in teaching techniques may have helped the child learn by changing his self-concept, his expectation of his own behavior, and his motivation, as well as his cognitive style and skills. (p. 180)

Effective schools advocates argue persuasively that higher teacher expectations result in improved performance. In effective schools, there is the expectations that all children can learn, and the staff believes they can get all children to learn. The sheer power of this belief is what can transform a low-achieving student body into winners. The self-fulfilling prophecy intensifies when the significant others in a child's life – parents, teachers, coaches, relatives – collectively send the message, "You can do it," and the child responds to this attention with a similar belief.

Negative Teacher Expectations

Anyone who has spent time in a faculty lounge knows that not all teachers believe all children are capable. Boys are not supposed to do as well as girls in the primary grades. Girls are not supposed to do as well as boys in high school mathematics and science courses. Minority students present more discipline problems in the classroom and on the playground. Such prejudices and biases of society at large are bound to wind up in the classroom. And they can be unconsciously reinforced to the point that they become true in the teacher's mind, not to mention the effect they have on students' self-images.

Independent or unruly students are viewed as having less potential than compliant pupils, even when they may be more creative. A student's lack of social graces, poor grooming, or non-standard English can influence the way a teacher responds and what expectations the teacher holds for the student. Labeling youngsters with IQ scores, special education classifications, and various grouping practices can contribute to the lowering of expectations. In fact, some teachers think they are doing a kindness by lowering expectations for students they perceive as less able.

Teachers often are not aware that they are reinforcing poor self-concepts in their charges. However, they do so through subtle cues and repeated insinuations, which communicate the message that certain youngsters are not going to achieve. Over time these youngsters begin to believe it and stop trying. Teachers can modify those behaviors that communicate low expectations once they are aware of them. Phi Delta Kappa distributes an inservice program designed specifically for this purpose called *TESA* (Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement).

Whether or not teachers *believe* all children can learn is less important than that they *behave* as if all children can learn. The distinction is important. Teachers who consistently behave as if all children can learn will eventually change their attitudes to be consistent with their behavior. Otherwise, the cognitive dissonance of having their views so discrepant with their behavior would cause them tremendous discomfort.

Promoting Higher Expectations

Lawrence Lezotte (1980) states: "If teachers, principals, and other members of the school social system hold high expectations for students, they are likely to create a program that is consistent with those expectations and in which students learn what is expected. If, on the other hand, some students are expected to learn less than others, they will tend to conform to those expectations" (pp. 25-26).

Teacher behaviors that promote higher expectations are known, observable, and transferable. They can be observed in effective schools. They can be learned in a staff development program or by peer coaching.

In effective school classrooms, all children have many opportunites to participate. Effective teachers use questioning techniques, such as giving the question to the whole class before calling on someone, making sure every child gets a turn, waiting longer for a low-achieving student to respond, using higher-order questions to stimulate thinking. These are pedagogical skills that all teachers can acquire.

"Feedback is the breakfast of champions" is a popular slogan in the effective school classroom. Everyone is a champ because everyone gets plenty of feedback. Feedback is not just dishing out warm fuzzies. Wrong answers are corrected, not ignored. Children in effective classrooms are given precise feedback about their work. They know exactly what is right, what is wrong, and what they need to do to improve. Children appreciate such honesty. Likewise, an effective teacher wants feedback from the principal and will respond to good coaching using the feedback.

In effective schools every student receives significant and meaningful amounts of the teacher's time. No favorites are played. Every pupil is aware that in this teacher's room the password is work and the key to success is to be actively engaged with the lesson. "Engaged time" is a current buzz-word among researchers, but good classroom practitioners have been doing it for years.

In addition to what goes on in individual classrooms, district policies can support the emphasis on high expectations and standards. In the author's school system in Oklahoma City, some of the efforts include:

- Nearly 70% of the staff have experienced a 36-hour program on effective schools with the participants receiving "All" buttons to remind them that all children can learn.

- High school graduation requirements have been raised. With the 1987-88 year, both juniors and seniors must carry a full schedule even if they have exceeded the increased graduation requirements.
- Students must maintain a C average to participate in athletics and other extracurricular activities.
- A new promotion/retention policy is in place requiring minimum standardized test scores, mastery of essential skills, adherence to classroom and homework standards, and no more than 20 days absence for promotion to the next grade level.

Final Comments

When little is expected, often little is taught, and even less is learned. Although some students may be able to compensate for low expectations, most will come to see themselves as they are seen – as the scholastically downtrodden.

High expectations are uplifting and empowering both to teachers and students. Generating high expectations is easier when educators truly believe all children can learn. Most important, however, is that teachers exhibit those behaviors known to raise expectations. When teachers behave as if all children can master the curriculum, students rise to the expectation and achievement moves up.

Eliza Doolittle was right!

Safe and Orderly Climate

James Sweeny (1988) defines school climate as:

> a combination of beliefs, values, and attitudes shared by students, teachers, administrators, parents, bus drivers, office personnel, custodians, cafeteria workers, and others who play an important role in the life of the school.
>
> When a school has a "winning climate," people feel proud, connected, and committed. They support, help, and care for each other. When the climate is right, there is a certain joy in coming to school, either to teach or to learn. (p.1)

School climate includes the total atmosphere. It's that feeling one gets after spending an hour in a school talking with staff, walking the halls, popping into classrooms, and visiting other learning spaces. Some schools are warm to the touch; others are like ice. Children seem to know what the school personnel value by the way they are treated.

The influence of school climate on raising student achievement is well documented by researchers. In an effective school, the prevailing climate is one in which all children can learn. Basic skills take precedence in every classroom. Teachers are confident of their abilities to have students master the curriculum. Students sense that adults are concerned about academic performance. The principal and the staff model desired behaviors. Uniform high standards and expecta-

tions are communicated regularly. Everyone shares in the responsibility for school improvement. Decision making is usually collaborative. Discipline policies are enforced consistently. The environment is safe, orderly, positive, and businesslike.

Climate and the Physical Facility

The climate of the physical facility is the easiest to assess, but its importance often is overstated. Children can learn and teachers can teach in well-maintained older structures just as well as they can in spanking, brand new buildings with all the latest architectural features. Thick carpets, air conditioning, and new furniture are not as important for learning as is an atmosphere that radiates care.

Commenting on the importance of maintenance, Ron Edmonds observed: "It isn't so much whether schools get windows broken; it's how long the windows stay broken. It isn't so much whether water fountains stop working, it's how long they don't work." Many school districts, financially unable to update older buildings, nevertheless have good learning going on in those buildings. A floor that is clean and unlittered, even though it has worn tiles, makes a statement every day to those who walk on its surface.

Climate and Safeness

James Comer (1980) makes the point that when students or adults feel that they are physically at risk, little teaching or learning transpires. A preliminary condition for learning is a safe school environment.

In the late 1970s Congress became so concerned about violence and vandalism in schools that it commissioned a study to find out the causes. Among the findings of the study, *Violent Schools – Safe Schools* (1978), were:

- Student reports of strict enforcement of school rules and strict control of classroom behavior are associated with low levels of school property loss.

- Student perceptions of tight classroom control, strictly enforced rules, and principal's firmness are associated with low levels of student violence.
- Reports by the teachers of strong coordination between faculty and administration are associated with a lower level of property loss.
- Schools where students complain that discipline is unfairly administered have higher rates of violence.
- Schools where teachers express authoritarian and punitive attitudes about students have greater amounts of property loss.
- Schools where teachers say they lower students' grades as a disciplinary measure have greater property losses.
- Student violence was higher in schools where more students say that they cannot influence what happens to them – that their future is dependent on the actions of others or on luck, rather than on their own efforts.

In contrast to violence-prone schools, discipline in effective schools is applied consistently throughout the school. Everyone knows what the rules are and what the consequences are for breaking them. Individual differences are not a factor when it comes to disciplining students who break the rules; all are treated the same. All teachers assume responsibility for maintaining order, regardless of whether the offender is assigned to them. Students know that faculty are in charge – in the hallways, the restrooms, the playground, as well as in the classroom.

Teachers make clear what is and is not appropriate behavior. Consistency in the enforcement of discipline results in a climate where students know what is expected of them. They come to class every day and are ready to work when the bell rings. The climate is not oppressive or punitive, simply orderly. This businesslike atmosphere contributes to the success of an effective school.

Principals in effective schools know that education is a people business, which requires a cadre of dedicated professionals working to-

gether to ensure that all children learn. Teamwork and collegiality prevail. The principal alternates between the roles of coach and quarterback to keep the team on course to achieve that goal.

Final Comments

Business and industry have rediscovered the value of manipulating the culture as a way of increasing productivity (Deal and Kennedy 1982). Effective schools have rediscovered this, too. It is the culture that makes people behave as they do. Establishing a positive, safe, and orderly school culture will result in positive student outcomes.

Frequent Monitoring of Student Achievement

What is meant by the term "effective" is subject to varying interpretations. However, for most the term "effective" means achieving agreed-on learning objectives. And the method effective schools use to assess progress on achieving the objectives is some form of standardized testing or other criterion-referenced measure.

Most school districts conduct standardized testing in the basic skill areas on an annual basis. Unfortunately, too few of them use the results as a basis for modifying instruction. Without changing the instructional program, standarized test scores are likely to remain the same year after year. Effective schools do not wait until the annual tests scores are in to adjust instructional practices. In these schools teachers regularly monitor student progress using commercial tests or other assessment instruments they have designed. They are prepared to make instructional adjustments on a daily or weekly basis, depending on the results of the monitoring process. In other words, they *manage* their instruction.

A school or districtwide instructional management system increases the likelihood that students will master the basic curriculum. According to the American Association of School Administrators (1983):

> Instructional management is what goes into knowing what students should learn; arranging people, programs, materials and other resources into a configuration to promote learning; and making appropriate ad-

justments based on assessment of the results. An effective instructional management system is one in which decisions are centered on the achievement of predetermined educational goals.

The four common components of effective instructional management are:

- A set of guiding statements or goals that give directions and provide reference points for measuring results;
- A means of assessing initial instructional needs and entry levels for diagnosing appropriate placements and grouping patterns;
- An organizational structure and instructional delivery process capable of providing alternatives and flexible uses of resources;
- A feedback method for monitoring and recording progress and evaluating actual results compared with goals. (pp. 5- 6)

Good teachers long have used their own informal instructional management systems on a daily basis in their classrooms. The advantage of a schoolwide instructional management system is that it is shared by all teachers and, thus, serves as a benchmark for assessing progress on a school or districtwide basis, as well as for individual student progress.

Measurement of results is often resisted by teachers, especially when the scores are made public. They fear that the scores may be misinterpreted or be used to criticize the school and its teachers. The staff of effective schools harbor few such apprehensions and oftentimes publically predict a year in advance what their scores will be.

If teachers are to be accountable for student learning, then there must be some yardstick to assess student progress and the total educational program. However, some advocates of effective schooling have overlooked or minimized the politically sensitive issues surrounding public disclosure of student test scores when the scores are disaggregated on the basis of socioeconomic status (SES), race, and sex.

In some communities disaggregation of test scores by SES and race is considered too hot to handle. But in speaking of the need for disaggregated scores, the late Ron Edmonds said, "Parents and children

need to know how well they are doing in relation to others." This author agrees. He has found that both staff and the public are more apt to to work to eliminate the achievement gaps if they are openly acknowledged and addressed.

Urban school districts have been more open in publicizing and analyzing disaggregated student test scores. These districts with large minority and low SES student populations are beginning to show a narrowing of achievement gaps. For example, in Oklahoma City the gap between the same white and black pupils narrowed by 13% from the third grade in 1985-86 to the fourth grade in 1986-87. It should be noted that a school effectiveness program was introduced throughout the district during this same period. In addition, the average scores for all students went up. Thus, it was a win-win situation. Other schools implementing effective school programs have experienced similar findings.

Active Parent Involvement

A relative newcomer to the list of effective school factors is active involvement of parents. The early research on school effectiveness did not include this factor. This author suspects that school practitioners probably were responsible for adding this factor to the list of effective school correlates. Subsequent research has confirmed the importance of active parent and community involvement in effective schools. The more parental involvement, the higher the student achievement (Henderson 1987).

Parents are key players in motivating their children to succeed in school. They are what researchers call "significant others," who along with teachers set expectations for children. Parents also reinforce the positive school climate and instructional focus of an effective school. Herbert Walberg's research on educational productivity includes the "curriculum of the home" as a powerful factor. For example, parents can control the amount of time devoted to television watching in order that homework is completed. Obviously, homework also can involve parents, if only in providing a time, place, and supervision to see that it gets done.

The 10 scholarship winners in the annual Westinghouse Science Talent Search are considered among the most precocious students anywhere. An article in *U.S. News and World Report* (14 March 1988) asks, "Why do these youngsters achieve out of the ordinary? What accounts for this early knack for knowledge? . . . These kids, with-

out exception, work hard. But why do they strive? The answer to these questions usually has plenty to do with parents and mentors. Nearly every Westinghouse winner has been lucky enough to have either an aspiring father or mother or an inspiring teacher. Most had both."

David Stevenson and David Baker (1987) in a recent study of parental involvement found that better-educated mothers "invest" more in their children's educational activities and have more contact with teachers. And this "investment" results in better performance of their children beginning at an early age.

Investment of parental time as a factor in achievement is reinforced in a study by the Gallup Organization for *Family Circle* (April 1988) magazine. Interviews were conducted with extremely successful people, their parents, and demographically similar parents (who did not necessarily have successful children). The main findings were that attentive fathers, frequent conversations between parents and children, free time for kids at an early age, and respect for children's interests and goals contributed to success.

Whether it's mom, dad, or both, the involvement of parents is often fostered by the local parent-teacher association in conjunction with the school. Participating in PTA programs and coming to activities at school can provide a comfort zone for parents and educators to work together to enhance children's learning.

Promoting parent involvement has been a major thrust in the Oklahoma City Public Schools' effective schools program. In 1984-85 there were only 14 PTAs functioning. By the 1987-88 school year there were 65 in operation. Attendance at school open houses has increased from 11,250 in 1984-85 to 16,922 in 1987-88. Parent-Teacher Conference Day attendance during the same period increased from 11,250 to 26,665. The participation of parents in bilingual and Chapter One advisory meetings also has risen dramatically. Volunteers have begun coming back into the schools after an absence of 15 years. As an alternative to student suspension, parents in grades 5 to 8 are giv-

en the opportunity to spend a day "shadowing" their child through their school schedule. The intent is to get the parents of children with behavior problems more involved. In the area of academics, parents receive lists of essential skills for their children's grade level along with suggested activities parents can use to help their children at home.

Final Comments

Educators striving to have effective schools must have active parent involvement. When parents are involved in the educational process, they become contributors to four of the factors associated with effective schools: setting high expectations, fostering school climate, providing instructional focus, and even monitoring student achievement. That is why effective school researchers and practitioners have added parental involvement as another factor associated with effective schools.

Some Caveats and Cautions

The schools have had more than their share of reform bandwagons and new pedagogical techniques foisted on them, few of which have really panned out. The pendulum swings back and forth, back and forth. Over the long haul, in subsequent replications, researchers find "no statistical difference" favoring one particular method or policy over another. As soon as a few articles are published touting the promise of some innovation, the attacks start to come. In the world of "publish or perish," if you are not creating something to publish, you can at least get something published that knocks someone else's creation. The effective schools movement and the research supporting it have not been immune to this syndrome.

In this chapter the author will attempt to provide some enlightenment on the current debate surrounding the effective schools movement. Readers are encouraged to read the original articles referenced herein, as well as to seek out other works critical of the effective schools movement and its supporting research. Being informed about all the issues that have surfaced allows one to contribute to the dialogue. This is healthy.

Larry Cuban is a scholar-practitioner with much credibility in the education community. His "friendly but cautionary note" regarding the effective schools approach deserves careful consideration. When serving as superintendent of schools, he initiated an effective schools project and has since studied similar programs in other school dis-

tricts across the country. He has admitted to sharing the belief that "teachers, administrators, and tightly coupled organizations can make an academic difference in the lives of children." But he admits to some reservations as well. Following are some of the problems Cuban has identified with effective schools research up to 1983.

> No one knows how to create effective schools. None of the highly detailed, lovingly written descriptions of effective schools can point to a blueprint of what a teacher, principal, or superintendent should do in order to improve academic achievement. Who knows with predictable precision how to construct a positive, enduring school climate? Exactly what do principals do to shape teacher expectations and instructional practices in ways that improve student performance? No one knows reliable answers to these questions. We have signs, but no road maps.
>
> The language is fuzzy. A half dozen definitions of effectiveness dot the studies. "Climate" is ambiguous. Some people feel the term "leadership" is undefinable.
>
> Effectiveness is a constricted concept. Tied narrowly to test results in mostly low-level skills in math and reading, school effectiveness ignores many skills, habits, and attitudes beyond the reach of paper-and-pencil tests. Educators and parents prize outcomes of schooling that reach beyond current definitions of effectiveness: sharing, learning to make decisions, developing self-esteem, and acquiring higher-level thinking skills (analysis, evaluation, etc.) and aesthetic sense.
>
> Research has been done in elementary schools. Apart from a few studies, most of the research has taken place in the lower elementary grades, and the findings have little applicability to the secondary school, an organization structurally quite different from its junior partner. (1983, p. 695)

Cuban's concerns are well taken, particularly at the time they were written. It is true that much more research has been done in elementary schools, but effective schools research at the secondary level (Troisi 1983) has found very similar results to studies done at the elementary level. Cuban also makes the point that measures of effec-

tiveness are narrowly tied to standardized test results. No problem with that, except that the public measures educational quality the same way most researchers usually measure it – by scores on standardized tests. Schools with high test scores are seen as being effective. Right or wrong, that is the way schools usually are judged. Many schools have not even been able to teach the "low-level skills in math and reading" found on standardized tests, especially to poor or minority students. Surely a school that is able to do that is more effective than a school that does not.

In 1983 Cuban was probably correct in stating that definitions of the effective school were "fuzzy." As more programs are implemented, more precise definitions will evolve, as has happened in Oklahoma City. Moreover, given the diversity of schools in this country, there are likely to be many definitions. So be it.

Although Cuban is correct that the research has not produced an exact "blueprint" or "road map," we do know some specific behaviors that are associated with effective schools. Besides, there are few precise "blueprints" for much of anything in education. It also should be pointed out that the early effective schools research was not designed as classical empirical studies showing cause and effect. Rather, it simply identified factors that were found to exist in effective schools. These factors were correlated with "effective" schools and, when reproduced, have generally resulted in raising student achievement.

Cuban also indicated concern over unanticipated tradeoffs surfacing within the effective schools movement – standardization increases, instructional agenda narrows, and schools with high test scores escape the obligation to improve. These consequences are quite possible. Being aware of them is perhaps the best safeguard for seeing that they do not happen.

Carl Glickman (1987) asks: Are "effective" schools equal to "good" schools? He thinks not and uses several anecdotal accounts to make his point that a school may have increased test scores and still not

meet some subjective judgments as being "good." Good schools can also be "effective," but being "effective" does not mean a school is good. Glickman makes a good point. However, "goodness" as a criteria for subjectively evaluating schools has more limitations than "effectiveness." Schools that have long held the reputation of being "effective" could be used as a test for Glickman's argument simply by asking those associated with the school if it is a "good" school.

A very vocal critic of the effective schools research is Lawrence Stedman (1987). He and Wilbur Brookover (1987) have been doing battle on the pages of the *Phi Delta Kappan* about the merits of the research and the interpretations of that research. Stedman takes issue with many of the findings, for example, that the principal should be a strong instructional leader responsible for instructional improvement. He proposes that effective schools should share governance with teachers and parents. Stedman also has reinterpreted the school effectiveness literature to arrive at a new set of correlates, which he claims are "highly interrelated practices useful as a prescription for effectiveness." His practices are:

- ethnic and racial pluralism,
- parent participation,
- shared governance with teachers and parents,
- academically rich programs,
- skilled use and training of teachers,
- personal attention to students,
- accepting and supportive environment, and
- teaching aimed at preventing academic problems.

One of the more enlightening critiques of the effective schools research is by John Ralph and James Fennessey (1983). After identifying the fragility of some of the research, they conclude: "The significance of the effective schools research lies more in the ideology underlying it than in the validity of the empirical support for the idea that schools can lessen the effects of race and social class on

academic achievement. This idea is crucial to our commitment to schooling as an egalitarian force in modern society." They go on to express their support for "further conceptual and theoretical development as well as further empirical research," but "doubt that such efforts will do much to change the current popularity of this model among school practitioners and reformers; they have already embraced the precepts of the effective schools model despite the absence of solid evidence. And perhaps they should."

Final Comments

School effectiveness research has had its critics, who question the validity of some of the data and the simplicity of the model. Admittedly, some of the research does not meet the methodological requirements of carefully controlled studies. Rather, it is descriptive or correlational research; it does not show cause and effect. Some of the critics' concerns have been mitigated with more recent studies. Nevertheless, the criticism has been healthy and serves as a reminder to effective schools advocates that all the answers are not in.

Even though effective schools research is descriptive and not causal, the basic tenets of the effective schools research remain intact. As more programs are implemented and further research is conducted, there will likely be refinements and modifications. Perhaps, someday research will even show cause-and-effect relationships. Ralph and Fennessey (1983) make a powerful point with their statement: "The effective schools perspective has an important place in educational thinking, but it has been mistakenly identified as a scientific model. We believe it is really a rhetoric of reform."

Clearly, the effective schools research does not provide a recipe for resolving school problems, although some reformers have advocated such a view. However, it does provide sufficient evidence as an approach to improving student achievement to warrant serious consideration by educators. After all, the scientific community has been

unable to prove conclusively that taking vitamin C on a regular basis wards off colds. Yet millions of people drink orange juice for that very reason. Effective schools may well be the orange juice or chicken soup needed for improving our schools.

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Beyond Effectiveness for a Few

Effective schools research began by studying a few inner-city schools that seemed to work despite a host of social problems endemic to urban areas. Gradually, more investigations replicated the results of earlier studies (McCormak-Larkin and Kritek 1982; Eubanks and Levin 1983). The five factors associated with effective schools have become part of educators' lexicon, and a new movement is under way. Yet the number of schools seriously engaged in effective school projects is still relatively small.

One explanation is that change happens very slowly in an education system plagued by inertia. It also takes time for the word to spread. Another explanation is that some people do not believe all children, particularly the poor and minorities, can master the standard school curriculum. The late Ron Edmonds (1979) had this to say on that point:

> How many effective schools would you have to see to be persuaded of the educability of poor children? If your answer is more than one, then I submit that you have reasons of your own for preferring to believe that basic pupil performance derives from family background instead of school response to family background. Second, whether or not we will ever effectively teach the children of the poor is probably far more a matter of politics than of social science, and that is as it should be.

The dream of being able to educate *all* children is closer to reality since the advent of the effective schools movement. For those who accept the challenge, now comes the hard part – to raise the achievement levels of all youngsters regardless of home background, race, sex, or socioeconomic status. This may take a decade or more to accomplish.

The public is demanding excellence in education, and the schools are responding in many positive ways. The danger we face in the drive for excellence is that we may inadvertently push excellence for the elite few. The effective schools model calls for excellence *and equity* for all children. In this country we can accept nothing less.

School effectiveness as a conceptual and operational model will continue to evolve. More research is needed. Purkey and Smith, among others, have called for longitudinal studies tracking school and student performance. While more research may fill in more of the blanks, Ron Edmonds (1979) cautions, "There has never been a time in the life of the American public school when we have not known all we needed to in order to teach all those whom we chose to teach."

The school effectiveness movement has spread from elementary to secondary schools, inner-city to rural schools, and from individual schools to entire school districts. More schools are investing time and resources to implement the effective schools principles. As the movement has gained momentum, more students are improving their achievement levels. They include not only the educationally disenfranchised – the poor, minorities, non-English speaking – but also white middle-class students. The school effectiveness model is applicable to all students.

At times school effectiveness resembles a revival movement directed at restructuring how schools operate. Much of the rhetoric of restructuring is directed at school governance issues; school effectiveness is directed at improving the learning of children. Educators should capitalize on the momentum of school effectiveness, which, like the magic feather, may be able to get the elephant we call public education soaring to new heights of achievement.

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